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Message Text

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70
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 IO-13 L-03 SS-15 NSC-10

ACDA-19 AID-20 PC-04 NIC-01 OMB-01 NEA-10 SAJ-01

COME-00 TRSE-00 EB-11 RSR-01 /183 W
---------- 119685
R 181811Z JUL 73
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2727
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES
AMCONSUL LUANDA
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 08302

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, UK, MZ
SUBJECT: BRITISH VIEWS ON ALLEGED MOZAMBIQUE MASSACRES

REF: STATE 140550

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED MOZAMBIQUE DEVELOPMENTS WITH PETER FOSTER, HEAD, SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEPT, FCO, AT LUNCH JULY 18 WHICH HAD BEEN ARRANGED PRIOR TO RECEIPT REFTEL. FOSTER WAS RATHER CAUTIOUS IN ASSESSING ALLEGATIONS BY SPANISH PRIESTS THAT PORTUGUESE TROOPS MASSACRED 400 AFRICANS AT VILLAGE OF WIRYAMU IN DECEMBER 1972 AND HAD PERPETRATED OTHER SIMILAR OUTRAGES IN RECENT YEARS. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT BRITISH HAVE NO INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ALLEGATIONS.

2. FOSTER'S VIEW WAS THAT WITH SO MANY VARIABLES IN THE PICTURE, ARGUMENTS OVER MASSACRE REPORTS BOILED DOWN TO (A) WHETHER ONE BELIEVED THAT PRIESTS HAD NO
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BASIS FOR DISSEMINATING PREJUDICED REPORTS AND THAT

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GENERAL SITUATION IN MOZAMBIQUE TENDED TO LEND CREDIBILITY TO PRIESTS' ACCOUNTS, OR (B) (FOR THE DEFENSE) WHETHER ONE CONCLUDED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF FIRST-HAND EVIDENCE AND IN THE LIGHT OF AN ASSESSMENT OF PORTUGUESE OBJECTIVES AND MODUS OPERENDI, SUCH LARGE SCALE MASSACRES WERE IMPROBABLE. ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT INDEED BRITISH OFFICIAL OPINION HAS BEEN BASED ON JUST SUCH CONSIDERATIONS, RATHER THAN ON ANY CONSIDERED ESTIMATE BASED ON FCO'S EXAMINATION OF REPORTS FROM THE FIELD.

3. IN JULY 17 PARLIAMENT DEBATE ON THE CAETANO VISIT, WHICH INCIDENTALLY WAS ONE OF THE MOST UPROARIOUS IN RECENT PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY, ARGUMENTS OVER MASSACRE ALLEGATIONS GENERALLY FOLLOWED LINE OUTLINED BY FOSTER. BUT PLIGHT OF MOZAMBIQUE AFRICANS TOOK SECONDARY POSITION TO RANCOROUS ARGUMENT OVER WHETHER PORTUGAL DESERVED TO REMAIN IN NATO. GENERAL CONSENSUS OF MORNING PRESS WAS THAT HAROLD WILSON, WHO URGED EXPULSION, WAS BESTED BY CONSERVATIVES (SOME SAID "MASSACRED"). MOST TELLING POINTS WERE SCORED BY FOREIGN SECRETARY DOUGLAS-HOME WHO TRUNDLED OUT SOME EMBARRASSING QUOTATIONS FROM WILSON'S DAYS AS PRIME MINISTER IN SUPPORT OF PORTUGAL AS AN "OLD AND LOYAL ALLY WITHIN NATO" AND HIS WARNING AGAINST "PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT A FRIEND AND ALLY" AT THE TIME WHEN THE MY LAI STORY BROKE IN THE US. SIR ALEC POINTED OUT THAT, LIKE PREVIOUS LABOR GOVT UNDER WILSON, PRESENT GOVT DOES NOT SUPPORT PORTUGUESE POLICIES IN AFRICA. REGARDING PORTUGAL'S POSITION IN NATO, SIR ALEC WENT ON TO SAY THAT, AS PRIME MINISTER, WILSON ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT THE PORTUGUESE SEABOARD IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF "OUR COMMON STRATEGIC CONCERN" WITH THE DEFENSE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC AREA. "THE FACTS OF GEOGRAPHY DO NOT CHANGE WHICH RELATE TO BRITAIN'S SECURITY NOR DOES OUR MUTUAL INTEREST IN TRADE CHANGE." IN A DIG AT HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN THE SHADOW CABINET, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY NOTED THAT BRITAIN'S EXPORTS TO PORTUGAL LAST YEAR TOTALLED 114 MILLION POUNDS STERLING, A FAR GREATER TOTAL THAN THE EXPORTS TO THE THREE COUNTRIES OF CONFIDENTIAL

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EASTER EUROPE WHICH MR. CALLAGHAN IS VISITING AT THIS MOMENT.

4. CAETANO VISIT WAS DEBATED UNDER AN ADJOURNMENT MOTION WHICH WAS DEFEATED BY 299 TO 271.

ANNENBERG

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